

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Courper.*



BACK TO LORNDALE.

A YOUNG WIFE'S STORY.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IT was still August when I returned to Lorndale, but August before the beauty of summer had faded, when the two seasons unite their distinctive characteristics of fruit and flowers. This time last year I came to this place a stranger, and now was going to my own home. What would that home be henceforth to me? There was but one answer—

either the fairest, happiest spot in the world, or one for ever shrouded in gloom. Beautiful it looked, bathed in the mellow sunlight of the afternoon, as the Lorndale carriage dashed along its broad road, overshadowed here and there with groups of noble elms.

With an interest altogether new, founded more particularly upon my relation to it, I scanned the stately pile as we approached. No alteration was perceptible on the outside, the reparations and changes

having been made in the interior. There it stood, apparently in the same state as we had left, a grand and noble building that any parent might covet for his child. Swiftly and softly, with its easy springs, the carriage rolled over the smooth gravel; already I could distinguish objects. The hall door was wide open, and two small figures were skipping about the flower-beds on the lawn.

"Nora and Hubert!" exclaimed Demarcay. He had been some time silent, my vague answers to his previous remarks having, as he told me afterwards, discouraged him from talking.

The name of Hubert startled me. Far from our being drawn more closely together, were we not likely to be further alienated, since any effort on my part to gain his affection would be paralysed by the consciousness of the injury he must receive through me? So the world would argue, giving in their hearts the prominent place to wealth, and very little consideration to careful training. But would an occupation of that kind be permitted me? Would not estrangement, deeper and more real than any the jealousy of Grover could compass, keep our lives very much apart? With a mixture of excitement and anxiety, I looked around for Victor, but to no purpose; he was not on the lawn. It was some satisfaction not to see Bertha Rogers there. Her presence at our first meeting would have been not only a drawback on my pleasure, but a palpable restraint.

"I fear Victor is worse than you told me; I do not see him out," I was observing to my companion, when we saw the little figures stand still, and, after looking towards us, make a sudden bound in the direction of the shadow of a large tree.

"There he is." As Demarcay spoke we could distinguish the rising up of a tall figure which began to walk slowly, our rapid movement bringing us to the house before his languid steps had traversed half the lawn. It was Victor, looking pale and weak, far more so than I had expected to find him.

"Let me out! let me out!" I cried, eagerly, every anxiety giving place to the joy of meeting again, and the wheels had hardly ceased to roll when I was on the turf beside him, and soon folded in his outstretched arms. "Victor! my Victor!"

"Ella! dear Ella! welcome home," were the first and only sentences uttered and heard by me, ere the will, like a funeral pall, hung between us again. But soon shaking off all depressing thoughts, I determined that, come what might on the morrow, I would be happy to-day.

"Why did you not send for me? Why not let me know how ill you were?" I asked, reproachfully, realising too vividly the sorrow and humiliation I might then have been spared.

"I never was in positive danger, and I knew my Ella was doing a work of mercy elsewhere," he answered, complacently, little guessing the serious facts that had grown out of our separation. Nora came plucking at my dress with childish impatience before I could give her any attention; and when Victor left me free to notice her, she flung her slender arms round my neck in an ecstasy of delight, calling me now her *dear* mamma, not the *new* one, as before. A year had passed since my marriage, and a year was a long period in her memory. Hubert stood clinging to Demarcay's hand, and not till it was withdrawn to give to Victor did he apparently think of me. Shyly edging himself nearer as his cousin turned away, he stopped within reach of my arm

and blushed like a girl. The old defiant expression was exchanged for one of embarrassment; he looked sheepish, as if half expecting an embrace, which I, on my part, was unwilling to volunteer.

"Have you no warmer welcome than that to offer, Master Hubert, when we are all so glad to see our dear one at home again?" said Victor, as the boy made a step forward and put a brown hand into mine. Impelled by the reproof, quite as much deserved by me as by him, I was kissing the little fellow's forehead when his father's next observation, "Shy, foolish boy, he little knows what he owes you," made me hastily withdraw my lips, leaving the child more shy and uncomfortable than before.

Soon afterwards Demarcay, Victor, and I were seated under the shade of one of the large, shapely trees, the former on a garden-chair, with Hubert hovering and climbing about him, his timidity entirely forgotten. My husband and I, with Nora playing with a bunch of flowers at our feet, were asking and answering questions of each other. We seemed to have so much to relate; yet ever present in my mind was the uncertain *dénouement* of a painful drama yet to be played out.

"Ella looks ill, and so much older. She has been tried above her strength, I fear," said Victor, addressing Demarcay first, and then me. "You have always shown so much energy and courage, Ella, that I forgot they could not last for ever. I ought to have been with you, but I could not leave home, being prostrated with fever. My illness could not have occurred at a more inopportune time. It was unfortunate."

"Very," I answered, mournfully, keenly realising from how much trouble his presence at Demarcay Castle might have saved me. What were the improvements in Lorndale in comparison to my peace of mind, and not that only, but the concord of the whole family? With Victor there, the colonel might have kept his intentions secret, or if he had thought fit to reveal them I should immediately have told my husband and consulted with him as to what was best to do. With him by my side, informed of the contents of the will as soon as I knew them myself, my position would have been different; no one would accuse me of having acted the base part of which I should infallibly now be suspected.

To tell him at present appeared in every way undesirable, nor had I sufficient presence of mind. What with anxiety and the consciousness that appearances were against me, I was but too sure to do it awkwardly, and only deepen the suspicion I wished to destroy.

Ignorant of the disappointment in store for him, Victor was much concerned about my health. "Instead of coming home to nurse me, as I hoped, you need nursing yourself. You are really changed, Ella. What is the matter?" he asked, and, drawing my face closer, he rested his soft, inquiring eyes upon it earnestly. One portion of my secret was discovered, for he said no more about my health, and when Demarcay's attention was diverted by some prank from Hubert, he pressed a silent kiss upon my lips. How near I was to happiness! For hours I could have sat, talking as we did of a hundred trifles, so important while confidentially discussed, when my serenity was disturbed by an unexpected question from Demarcay.

"When did you say Mr. Stebbings was coming to read the will?"

"The day after to-morrow. I put it off on Ella's account, thinking she might be tired. You will have a whole day to rest yourself; I could not well persuade him to wait longer," said Victor, apologetically, on seeing me start. "Unhappily, we must receive our cousins from the north, but they are quiet, homely people, who will not give you much trouble. Stebbings told me to ask them, which of course means that they are interested parties."

"Has he made any revelations?" asked Demarcay.

"No more than what I told you, that there were no directions respecting the funeral. Stebbings was uncommonly close about the business altogether. However, he went so far as to tell me to act as if everything were mine until the will was read."

"And that is tantamount to declaring the fact. Accept my felicitations," said Demarcay, in a matter-of-fact way. "I never expected to be his heir, but hope he has not forgotten me."

"Not likely; you were ever the favourite nephew. Had you chanced to be the son of his brother instead of his sister, it would have gone ill with me. You would have been adopted in my stead."

Adopted! The strong expression sent a thrill to my heart. How curiously my husband seemed choosing his words, and how sure he was making of the property.

Forestalling my wish to spend the first evening after my return without visitors, he had requested Mrs. and Miss Rogers not to call till the following morning. How everything that occurred at this epoch of my life remains fixed upon my memory, even to the desultory conversations springing up between us.

"It was well for my poor Ella that Uncle Demarcay was not an advocate for cremation in his own person—and he might have been, as he frequently expressed approbation of the system. How would you have borne that?" asked Victor, as we three sat and chatted together.

"Or to be kept as a petrification, like Mazzini; we must then have shut him up in one of the turrets of the castle," said Demarcay, enjoying my look of horror at his suggestion, before explaining that this was a newly-revived process invented by some of the *servants* of former days. "Professor Gorini, an Italian celebrity, possesses a museum of these anatomical specimens," he continued, at home in the repulsive details, "a museum of the dead, whom he has rendered hard as stone, while preserving the appearance of being asleep. Some of his petrified heads, after thirty years, look like life."

Both Victor and I protested against a collection so unnatural, and were unwilling to believe in its existence.

"It is true, quite true; also that the honour of this stony preservation was given to Mazzini, the hero of Republican Italy."

"How dreadful!" I exclaimed, truly thankful that Colonel Demarcay had not outraged our feelings by choosing such an embalment for himself.

"Why dreadful? Is it not the triumph of science over the laws of matter?" said Demarcay.

He looked at me keenly, apparently enjoying these side-thrusts at my opinions.

"It is a puny, short-lived attempt to controvert the divine decree, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,'" I answered, hotly, not quite sure whether he spoke in jest or earnest, yet willing to

enter upon the contest. "Your professor must die himself, and, after a time, his ghastly treasures will pass into other hands, to be either destroyed or put out of sight."

"But he will have outlived death," observed Demarcay, triumphantly.

"Which you and I shall do without the assistance of the Italian professor," I added, with an earnestness that Demarcay understood and respected, for, instead of pursuing the subject, he smiled kindly and put out his hand.

Just before dinner I had gone into the nursery, having been too much engaged in the early part of the afternoon to talk much to the children. At a distance I had seen Grover watching us with her sharp, lustrous eyes while waiting about for Hubert and Nora, but she had not approached near enough for me to speak to her. As I entered her arms were clasped round Nora, who seemed as much troubled as surprised by the tender, pitying epithets lavished upon her, while Hubert stood aloof regarding them both with precocious gravity.

"How do you do, Grover? I hope you are well. It is unnecessary to inquire after the children, they both look in perfect health."

All this I had time to say, and was in the middle of the room before she changed her attitude or desisted from her embraces of the little girl. Slowly she now rose, muttering something not very graciously about hoping I had had a pleasant journey. Instead of trying to run up to me, as was her habit, Nora stood still and looked at me, dazed, if not frightened, by the ultra warmth of Grover's caresses, and held also by the firm clasp of her nurse's hand. Her childish prattle seemed to have left her, for she had not a word to say. The greatest change was in Hubert. Shaking back his curls as a young lion might have shaken his newly-flowing mane, he made a spring to my side, and became as communicative as he had formerly been reserved, talking shyly at first, but increasing in volubility as he went on, until he had made me acquainted with the principal facts concerning himself. "I don't go to school, I have a tutor instead, who comes to me every morning; and I like him. He will come to-morrow; to-day was a holiday; papa begged it for me to be with him. My tutor says I ought to have my curls cut off because it is so like a girl to wear them. And I want to have them cut, but Grover and Aunt Bertha won't let me. Papa says I am to hear what you say. Do say 'yes'; do say 'yes,'" he pleaded, clinging to my arm in his eagerness to secure my vote on his side.

"No, Master Hubert; you know your papa does not wish them to be cut off. He only said that to quiet you because you were so teasing," observed Grover, not giving me time to answer. "You ought to be a good, obedient boy to poor papa, who has been so ill, and not worry him."

"I did not worry him," said Hubert, proudly. "I only asked him, and he said that—that—that you should decide."

Beginning by answering Grover, he abruptly ended with me, adroitly choosing words that gave me no title. "Oh, do let me have them off; do, do," he went on, impetuously; and, taking my hand in both of his, rubbed it coaxingly over his cheek. The little rebel was subdued, and applying to me as the superior authority. Slight as was this first attempt at a caress, it had a great fascination for me. Had it not been for Grover's dark angry eyes, I

must have kissed his smooth brow and drawn him to my heart with some of the tenderness it was longing to testify. But under that basilisk gaze, with the painful remembrance of what was coming upon him, I could only venture to press his little hand. There was so much fierce hatred in her expression that it seemed better to avoid everything likely to stir it up to a whiter heat, especially as, before long, her tongue would find sufficient occasion for breaking loose and bespattering me with its venom. Obviously she was out of humour; but whether because her quick observation foresaw a rival to the children, or that her dislike was intensified by the change that had come over my husband, it was difficult to say. Either case was probable.

"When you go to school you will have them cut off, and not before. Your aunt promised you that," she said, taking the answer out of my mouth before Hubert had finished speaking.

"Come back, sir, come back, Master Hubert," she cried after us, in a loud, sharp voice, for I had left the room, and was followed by Hubert.

"Oh, let me have them off; papa said you should settle it," he argued, in a pretty, shy, coaxing way, holding me fast and raising his animated face with a look of earnest entreaty. "I don't want to be like a girl; girls are babyish, and cry at anything. I want to be a man, or like a man. I will be so good if you will let me have them cut off."

Could it be otherwise? When the supple arms were hugging me round the waist with all the strength in their power to put forth, and the blushing cheek rested against me as outwardly coy, but essentially determined, he pleaded for the shearing of his locks as a less manly boy might have asked to retain them, I felt my triumph. If not entirely won, he was on the point of being so, and his sturdy repugnance was melting into confidence. For once, if only for once, I might indulge myself with the enjoyment of it. "My dear boy, I will speak to your father, and, if allowed to decide, it shall be as you wish," I answered, using the tender epithet for the first time since he had rebuked me for adopting it, and, bending down, kissed him with a fondness all the greater for the injury so involuntarily done him.

"Master Hubert, come here directly; it is tea-time." Grover stood beside us, and, laying a hand on the boy's shoulder, was about to drag him away. Pushing her off, Hubert flung both arms round my neck, gave me a loud and hearty kiss, and then quietly accompanied her to the nursery. He was conquered at last. Childish as it may seem, I nearly cried for joy.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THIS was the day Mr. Stebbings was expected at Lornedale to read the will. The morning began with that rich, warm sunshine which, contrary to its own laws, falls so drearily upon a heart wherein lies any secret sorrow or undefined dread.

Little anticipating the disappointment in store, Victor already looked and walked and talked as the master of this goodly domain, telling me several times over, perhaps by way of excuse for his high flow of spirits, how much better he felt since my return.

"When some of the business engagements, indispensable at first, have been attended to, we will go away together, Ella," he said, believing he was pro-

posing a real pleasure to me. "I shall get strong all the faster for a change; you will look after me and I shall watch over you."

No prospect could be held out to me dearer than this, had circumstances permitted me to enjoy it. As it was, I received the announcement with a poor attempt at appearing glad.

Before twelve o'clock the cousins invited on this occasion arrived. They were of the old family stock, though calling themselves Marcey, and boasted of having come to England at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Neither Mr. Richard Marcey nor his two maiden sisters had any pretensions to the family type, which was grand and noble; on the contrary, they were very far removed from it. Mr. Richard was small and timid, with a deprecatory manner, as if doubting whether his existence were a fact entirely agreeable to any one, or whether it was not a mistake for which he was in some measure responsible. Part of the intelligence, which would have been so useful to him as well as in its proper place, had somehow fallen to the share of his elder sister, who held the reins with a strong hand.

Miss Letitia Marcey, the second sister, was altogether of an opposite character. Nature had not forgotten to endow her with a full share of peculiarity, not to say weakness, which must often have exposed her to ridicule. She was one with whom time stood still. Once very pretty, she imagined herself unchanged, notwithstanding the revelations to be found in her glass. Too short-sighted morally, if not physically, to see clearly, she forgot the thefts and changes years will make in their course, and thought herself young enough to please by her personal appearance.

To Mr. Richard was given another quality, not exactly the most useful in this world of gradations—he was an optimist. If the present did not shine in brilliant colours the future always did. Something, he was sure, would turn up; and every pleasant incident, as it came to pass, was made pleasanter to himself, because he had foreseen it all beforehand; not, however, pleasanter to his sensible, practical sister, who generally lost her temper over his perpetual asseverations that every mischance would turn out well in the end.

During the waiting time, Demarcay Evans, in a spirit of mischievous frolic, devoted himself to Miss Letitia, taking wicked pleasure in feeding her peculiar foible by exaggerated compliments. Had it not been for the absurdity the disparity of age suggested, he might have been taken for her ardent admirer. Once or twice I interfered for her defence by turning his flattering phrases into ridicule, for which the lady too evidently did not thank me, so hopelessly blind is the vanity that survives our youth. Our two elder cousins were turned fifty, and Miss Letitia must have been on the verge of it. For three hours we had them to entertain before the important one arrived. In different ways all three showed themselves to be considerably excited, though the elder sister, assuming a grave dignity amusing to see, made continual efforts to subdue it. More naïf, Mr. Richard could not help talking. Something good he knew was going to happen, for no one was ever asked to the reading of a will who had not some interest in it. His northern home being a long way off, he inferred, not unnaturally, that it could not be in mere compliment he was invited to Lornedale.

"And you expect your legacy to be in proportion to the distance you have come to hear about it, a sort of guinea-a-mile bequest, eh?" said Demarcay, with quiet raillery, exhilarated also, I thought, though not so simple in showing it.

Poor Victor was not behind his cousin in animation; this will was causing new revelations of character unsuspected before. Of course Mr. Richard disclaimed the mercenary motives attributed to him, explaining that he only meant that something advantageous would come out of this summons; Colonel Demarcay not having noticed them for several years, there must be a reason for doing so now.

"He has remembered us, Richard, and we are grateful; it is an honour to belong to the Demarcay family," said Miss Marcey, striving to appear more indifferent than she really was.

After luncheon, which the cousins helped to make more agreeable than it would have been without them, Mrs. Rogers and Bertha came, why I know not, except that Victor had invited them, perhaps as Hubert's nearest relatives, for they could have no other claim to be among us on this occasion. Anticipating only humiliation for my portion, I was sorry to see them; to me they could not be otherwise than antipathetic.

Mr. Stebbings had not lunched with us. He took some refreshment at the station and arrived only a few minutes before the time we were called to assemble. At three o'clock we all repaired to the library. The lawyer, in earnest conversation with Demarcay, was standing as we entered near the seat he was to occupy, with his face in the direction of the window, looking very grave and somewhat bored; but as Victor mentioned his cousins by name, he turned and shook hands with them. My turn came next, and then he went through the same ceremony with Mrs. and Miss Rogers. His feelings towards me were not changed. As our hands met I scarcely felt the contact, nor did he look at me. The same peculiarity marking his manner when last at Lornedale characterised it on the present occasion, with this difference, that what was mystery to me then was explained now. The colonel having destroyed the will made while I was under his displeasure, which was probably fair and just in its tendency, the former one, wherein I was singled out for the dishonouring honour, now so deprecated, would stand, and this he attributed to an unworthy exercise of influence on my part. Notwithstanding his legal acumen, his searching eyes, and the unsparing use he made of them, he was wrong, and obstinate too, not only judging falsely, but clinging to his judgment for no better reason than that he had formed it.

Choosing a seat near Demarcay, supposing him more friendly to me than the rest, I sat down at one end of the table, with Victor on the other side of me, but some distance off, while the others, instinctively marking off us three as principals, grouped themselves together lower down.

Throughout the day my husband had frequently remarked upon my tired looks, for which I always pleaded a headache, and now sat leaning my elbow on the chair, with my head resting upon my hand, plunged into a state of apathetic resignation. A painful trial, from which there was no escape, was to be endured; beyond that there had been no effort made to school myself. As in a waking dream I saw Mr. Stebbings draw from his pocket the obnoxious document, crackling with a grating sound as he un-

folded it and then spread it before him on the table, while he made an ostentatious use of his handkerchief, thus prolonging our suspense a few seconds more. There wanted but the pastime of the snuff-box to complete my mental torture. Then came the fatal moment. Clearing his voice, he was about to begin, when Victor, asking pardon for the interruption, rang the bell, desiring Hubert to be sent to him. Why had he done that? It was an additional aggravation of my impending mortification that this child, so keen to observe and so shrewd in making deductions from what he saw or heard, should be there, a witness of the unfavourable impressions I had to encounter.

Keeping his eye on the parchment, Mr. Stebbings complacently waited until the child appeared, who, at his father's call, ran towards him and stood folded in his arms, surveying us all in silent perplexity. The reading commenced. The lawyer's voice was at first so mixed with a buzzing in my ear that I heard nothing distinctly, only a rignmarole of words without meaning, except that Colonel Demarcay was of sane mind—a fact rather to be doubted—and that he had great possessions. There was an endless repetition of "the said Victor Marcey Demarcay, of Lornedale, in the county of Sussex," and of some other place in the county of Westmoreland, of which I had never heard till now, and "seigneur of the Chateau De Marcey, in Normandy, who willed, devised, and bequeathed." The first clause really riveting my attention concerned Demarcay Evans. "To my beloved nephew, Demarcay Evans, only surviving son of my sister, Mary Demarcay, relict of John Evans, barrister, of the county of Kent, the sum of £10,000." As this was read, I stretched out my hand to him in token of congratulation. It was some satisfaction that one of our number was safe from disappointment. The legacies continued. To Mr. Richard Marcey was left £1,600, to the elder sister £500, and to the younger £400, as a remembrance. Why the colonel made this distinction between the two sisters did not appear, but it would only be consistent with his character to impute the smaller bequest to his knowledge of the weaker quality of Miss Letitia's brain. It gave me pleasure to find that old Patrick had been handsomely remembered, the frequent caprices of his master having caused me some anxiety on his account. This I should have been spared by a little reflection, the will so distasteful to me on my own account having been made before either of us had offended him. Small legacies to some of the other servants followed, and then came the name of Victor. To him and to his heirs for ever he left his chateau in Normandy; Lornedale, with the mansion and all the tenements connected with the estate; and also all other property not otherwise disposed of, of which he died possessed. Then, indeed, my heart leaped for joy. The horrid weight which had hung as a millstone round my neck fell away as if by magic when Mr. Stebbings pronounced the word Lornedale, and yet its removal was almost painful in its suddenness. Stupefied by the unexpected relief, I hardly knew whether I was dreaming now or had been dreaming before, or whether Colonel Demarcay, confused in his ideas by illness, had made a mistake, confounding intentions with acts. With a full heart longing to express its happiness, I looked at Victor, but he was not thinking of me. Flushed to a deep crimson, the result of excitement upon his weakened constitu-

tion, he was regarding Hubert with intense affection. There needed no other language to testify how truly he rejoiced that the future prospects of this beloved child were secured, and when Mr. Stebbings finished reading, he kissed the wondering boy with a fervour that brought a deepened colour to his cheek. A low buzz of general satisfaction followed, even before the last syllable had left the lawyer's lips, but this was quickly stilled. Waving his hand for silence, Mr. Stebbings commanded instant attention by pronouncing the obnoxious word, "*codicil*." All who had already stirred resumed their seats, and waited with visible curiosity, the solemn tone of the lawyer's voice having prepared them for something startling. As for me, the beatings of my heart might have been counted, so loud did they sound, that I purposely rustled my dress in order to conceal them from the others.

"*Codicil*!" repeated Mr. Stebbings, and again began to read. By the date, this *codicil* had been appended some months after my marriage, when my favour with the colonel was at its zenith.

Now was the dreaded crisis, the great ordeal of my life was come, and there was no way of avoiding it. Over the burning ploughshare of public opinion I must pass. Would Victor, would Demarcay, would any one believe me innocent of any attempt to influence the testator?

Resuming my former attitude as the best calculated to screen my poor, guilty-looking face from general observation, I tried hard to preserve an appearance of calmness. But listening was out of the question. A few words only, mixed with technicalities, reached my ear at first, but soon my breath nearly stopped. The lawyer read on clearly, though monotonously, exactly what I was dreading to hear. The body of the will just read was revoked, and the estate of Lomdale bequeathed to the first-born son of Ella, wife of his nephew, Victor Demarcay. Three executors were appointed to carry out this last will and testament—my husband, Demarcay Evans, and my uncle, Captain Worsley. All was in order.

It might not be believed, but the sigh that escaped me was quite as genuine as the murmurs of surprise and disappointment that went round the room. Out of the mixed sounds of disapproval, one rose clearly above the others, making my ears tingle—"Shame! shame!" It must have proceeded from Bertha Rogers; she only, in zeal for the interests of her sister's children, could have so grossly infringed the rules of conventional propriety. By a furtive glance directed towards Victor, I knew he had given a quick start when the *codicil* was read, but that was all. Recovering himself almost immediately, he silently drew Hubert into a closer embrace. There was a touching dignity about him, which, by gaining general sympathy, made my situation more cruel. Too well I knew what meant the palpable silence that ensued, and the absence of every syllable of congratulation. It was now my turn to speak. However difficult, an explanation was due to myself, though, in the face of circumstances so suspicious, it was not likely to be well received. There are few who have not had some experience of the hopelessness of the task, when an attempt is made to change a judgment already formed. Had the age of Hercules been less material, this might have been assigned as the mightiest of his labours. Twice I was prevented from speaking by the huskiness of my throat. Taking my hand from my face, I began smoothing the papers

prepared for Colonel Demarcay to sign; they were not likely to do me any good, nevertheless I resolved to lay them before the lawyer. "I am very sorry this has happened," I commenced, in an unsteady voice that gave no effect to my words; "I did all I could to prevent it."

A low, murmuring sound, suggestive of dissent, came from somewhere. Of course, no one believed me; it was foolish of me to expect they would. But that was not all. By intuition it must have been, for I heard nothing definite, it became pretty evident that this candid confession of having been made acquainted with the contents of the will was telling more and more against me. No one appeared disposed to listen further. The Marcays, satisfied with their legacies, were really indifferent to the finer details of our family affairs, except that they obviously thought there was something in the matter that ought not to be. With them, as with the rest, I was already judged, and what I might have to say in my defence could change neither facts nor opinions.

Victor, pale now, and with the traces of his recent illness more than ever apparent, leant his cheek on the head of Hubert, who, conscious that some painful incident had occurred by which his father was grieved, stood still and silent, stiffening his slight frame as much into a support as his childish strength permitted. I glanced at Demarcay. He had not stirred nor given any sign or word while Mr. Stebbings was reading the *codicil*, and now sat with downcast eyes, stroking his chin with an air of deep pre-occupation. Did he, too, condemn me? Did he believe me to be the hypocrite I appeared? When conversing together I had so earnestly contended that there could be no solid foundation for good in any character where religion is not accepted as the groundwork, did he think these were idle words, or worse than idle, base counterfeit, a mere talking for effect? Alas! it seemed so, and this fear cut me to the quick.

Whilst absorbed in these reflections, I scarcely noticed that Mr. Stebbings virtually finished the business by folding up the will, every rustle of which deepened the general feeling against me, not, at least, until my attention was aroused by other sounds. The company, rising from their chairs, were about to disperse.

"Will no one listen to me? Does no one care to hear the truth?" I asked, in desperation at finding myself so completely ignored. "Victor, Demarcay, oh, hear me; it is hard not to let me tell my tale."

"Tell it, Ella," said a clear voice near me, "and I will request our friends to listen. Be so good as to resume your seats for a little while," said Victor, aloud, and, giving the example by immediately sitting down, he again rested his cheek on the head of his boy, who stood between his knees, quiet as a lamb. Disappointed as he was, my husband could not permit himself to be unjust or unkind.

RHYMES UPON PLACES.

NOT a few of our towns and villages have curious traditional rhymes attached to their names, illustrating some natural or other peculiarity. In many cases, although railway communication has entirely altered the character of certain localities, yet

these time-honoured rhymes are still vigorously kept up by the inhabitants, chiefly, no doubt, on account of their long association. Thus, in Gloucestershire, the following rhyme is proudly repeated by the peasants :—

"Beggary Bisley,
Strutting Stroud,
Hampton poor,
And Painswick proud."

The villages referred to are within four miles of each other, and forty or fifty years ago the adjectives exactly described the condition of the people. Since, however, the introduction of railways this is no longer the case, as they now possess the advantages of other places.

In Derbyshire we find existing a quaint couplet, and not, too, of a very complimentary nature :—

"Derbyshire born, and Derbyshire bred,
Strong in the arms, and weak in the head."

The following rhyme explains itself :—

"Stanton-on-the-Stones,
Where the devil broke his bones."

In Hertfordshire there is a common saying :—

"They who buy a horse in Hertfordshire,
Pay three years' purchase for the air."

There are some curious rhymes current in Norfolk, of which the following is a specimen :—

"Rising was a seaport town,
And Lynn it was a wash,
But now Lynn is a seaport town,
And Rising fares the worst."

The villages to which allusion is made in the subsequent couplets are situated in the district between Norwich and Yarmouth :—

"Halvergate hares, Reedham rats,
Southwood swine, and Cantley cats ;
Acle asses, Moulton mules,
Blighton bears, and Freethorpe fools."

At Norwich, visitors are often told how—

"Caistor was a city ere Norwich was none,
And Norwich was built of Caistor stone."

The people of Kent pride themselves on what they consider the truth of the accompanying saying :—

"English lord, German count, and French marquis :
A yeoman of Kent is worth them all three."

In Surrey one may sometimes hear the following :—

"Sutton for good mutton,
Cheam for juicy beef,
Croydon for a pretty girl,
And Mitcham for a thief."

A village in Essex, called Ugley, possesses the unfortunate saying :—

"Ugley church, ugly steeple,
Ugley parson, ugly people."

A Buckinghamshire rhyme is not less uncomplimentary in its description of Tring, Wing, and Ivinghoe, which it characterises as,—

"Three dirty villages all in a row,
And never without a rogue or two.
Would you know the reason why ?
Leighton Buzzard is hard by."

Most are, doubtless, acquainted with the well-known rhyme belonging to Preston :—

"Proud Preston,
Poor people,
High church,
Low steeple."

This is not unlike one prevalent in Lincolnshire :—

"Gosberton Church is very high,
Surfleet Church is all awry,
Pinchbeck Church is in a hole,
And Spalding Church is big with foal."

Nertown, a village adjoining Taunton, in Somersetshire, and lying to the north side of it, is thus described in an old couplet :—

"Nertown was a market town
When Taunton was a fuzzy down."

The following Nottinghamshire rhyme is curious :—

"Eaton and Taton, and Bramcote-o'-th'-Hill,
Beggary Beeston, and dirty Chilwell ;
Waterside Wilford, hey little Lenton !
Ho fine Nottingham ! Colwick and Snennton."

In conclusion, we must not omit to quote Shakespeare's memorable words, which give a classic precedent for these rough rhymes on places :—

"Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Haunted Hilbro', hungry Grafton,
Dudging Exhall, Papist Wicksford,
Beggary Broom, and drunken Bidford."

THREE WEEKS IN RHINELAND :

ON THE MOSEL, THE LAHN, AND THE NECKAR.

II.

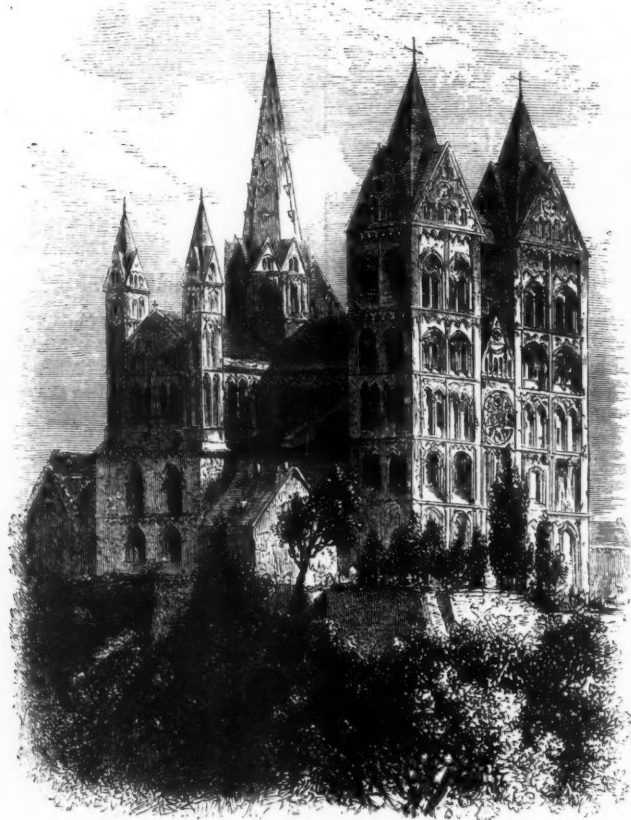
ALMOST immediately beyond Dietz a total change occurs in the scenery. The rocky banks which there enclose the river disappear, the narrow valley widens out, and, almost suddenly, we emerge into an open country. We were quite startled by the unexpected change; startled, and somewhat dismayed; for, looking back on Dietz with its rocky gorge, and its bridge deep sunk between the banks, and its towering castle, we seemed to be saying good-bye to the

bold and picturesque, and hurrying into the tame and commonplace. However, for Limburg are we bound, and to Limburg we must go. A very short time took us there, and we were soon established in very comfortable, though homely, quarters at the "Preussischer Hof," the best inn in the place.

I had been directed thither by a very obliging fellow-traveller, a resident at Limburg, engaged in some business there connected with the minerals

found in the neighbourhood. This gentleman had formerly passed some years in England, and spoke English well; and having now few opportunities, as he said, of speaking it, he was glad to make use of his talent with us; to us he proved of great use. He was now returning from the village of Oberwesel, on the Rhine, where his family was staying, and where he had been spending the Sunday with them. In the absence of his family, he was living as a boarder at the inn. Finding the midday *table d'hôte* just over (hours are early at Limburg), we and

would please a painter much. But the Cathedral was what we were in search of, and we had not to search long. A narrow street took us past a lesser church, apparently the one chiefly used, after which another, still narrower, ascending steeply and ending in a short flight of broken and mossy steps, brought us to the platform, or terrace, on which the Cathedral stands. The moment we stood face to face with it we felt that we had made no mistake in coming to Limburg. It stands on a rocky eminence directly above the Lahn. In front is a spacious, open court,



LIMBURG CATHEDRAL.

he dined together on what was left, both well and cheaply. We two seemed to be the only strangers in the place; the guests at the *table d'hôte*, who were still smoking their pipes in the room when we entered, were evidently all townsfolk. Indeed, our friend told us that foreigners so seldom came to Limburg that a strange face always caused a great deal of whispering and questioning: "Who are they? Where do they come from?" and so forth. "And so," our friend said, "it will be with you;" and so, indeed, it proved. After dinner we sallied forth to explore, while our friend went to his business. Our hotel we found to stand at the corner of the little Platz, or square, round which most of the principal shops are placed. Some of the houses are old and picturesque, and altogether the Platz

commanding fine views of the neighbourhood; to the left are the old churchyard and the more modern burial-ground, the former bounded by a low stone parapet, which surmounts a terrace wall, and the wooded slope beneath, at the foot of which winds the Lahn. The parapet wall seems as old as the church itself. *Ruta muraria* hangs in rich tresses from between the slabs, a plant or two of which (though sadly lessened in size) now flourishes in my fernery in England. The Cathedral is in a style not often met with at home, and, therefore, all the more interesting—the Byzantine, with a mixture of the pointed Gothic. It would be called, I suppose, *transition*. In beauty this style cannot be considered equal to the style which came immediately after it, but the interest of it is great. The date of this particular

building is said to be 1235. An inscription over the doorway gives an older date, 909; but that refers to buildings of this style. The roof of the nave, filling up the space between the towers, is, of course, much



KÖNIGSTEIN CASTLE.

an earlier building, replaced by the present one. The principal features, as will be observed from the lower; but far above it, on a level with the highest storey of the towers, the interval between them



OBER-REIFENBERG.

engraving, are the central spire and the two front, or western, towers. These last are six storeys in height, and end in a roof of the form peculiar to is crossed by a covered wooden gallery, forming a bridge between them, the effect of which is curious, though not, perhaps, beautiful. We found

the inside hardly equal to the outside in interest, at least, in its present state, for it is all besmeared with whitewash. Altogether, it is by no means in ornamental condition, though it is the Cathedral church of a bishop; and it gives one the impression of being seldom visited. I believe this to be a true impression. Artists and architects come now and then to gaze and to copy; but Limburg, with its Cathedral, is out of the route of the ordinary tourist.

We mounted, by a rough stone staircase inside one of the towers, first to the top of the nave, and then to that of the tower itself, and crossed the hanging gallery to the other tower. Half-way up, at the level of the top of the nave, we were surprised at coming to a human habitation. A rough, wild-looking family occupied some rooms boarded off from the surrounding space, and several shaggy children came out to look and wonder as we climbed past their dwelling. We went in as we came down again. They live amidst an abundance of dust and cobweb, and mouldering wood and stone, and they must sleep every night to the music of the howling wind; but they have plenty of fresh air, and they look down on the world beneath from the grand round-arched windows, and enjoy (or *may* enjoy) a magnificent view. The old ladder, by which we ascended to the topmost storey and got among the bells, was rough and steep, and the rungs wide apart, so that I thought I had performed a great feat when I stood in one after another of the narrow window-openings at the top, grasping the central shaft, and looked round on all sides at the splendid prospect. This quite satisfied me, but my son was not content without climbing still higher into the very peak of the roof, and even, if I mistake not, bringing down a bit of cobweb to preserve as a memorial.

The Cathedral is by far the chief object of interest at Limburg, and we found ourselves mounting the steps to it again and again in the course of the day. Yet the little old town itself is by no means without interest, and the bridge across the Lahn is almost as old as the Cathedral. Small and out-of-the-way as Limburg is, it boasts a photographer of its own, "Herr Hardt." We paid a visit to his studio, and it is from his photograph that the accompanying engraving of the Cathedral is taken.

Protestants and Romanists are here brought into close contact. The duchy of Nassau is about equally divided between them; not so its particular towns. Limburg, for instance, is almost entirely Romanist, and its Cathedral is used for that mode of worship, while Dietz, only three miles off, is chiefly Protestant. I asked whether this close neighbourhood led to strife, but was told that, generally speaking, the two bodies lived harmoniously. Whether this is really the case, or whether, if so, it is the result of Christian charity or of religious indifference, I cannot say. Limburg has about 5,000 inhabitants, its neighbour, Dietz, much fewer.

In the evening we were still the only travellers in the hotel, but a considerable number of townspeople came in to sup together, as they seemed to be in the habit of doing. We, English fashion, had *tea*, rather earlier and at another table; and very excellent tea it was. Each member of the supper party, as he came in and took his place, bowed politely to us, and often, as their meal went on, we saw furtive glances cast round at us, and fancied that we heard whispered questions, exactly as our friend had foretold. In the middle of

the supper he himself came in, and was greeted by all the supper party as one of themselves. Before sitting down, however, he stepped across to our table, shook hands with us warmly, and eagerly inquired how we had employed the day, what we had seen, and what impressions Limburg had made on us. Curiosity, we could see, was now at its height. To see one of themselves so intimate with the strangers roused the wonder of all; and when our friend took his seat at the supper-table, we could not doubt that our noble selves were the subject of the inquiring looks and muttered questions addressed to him. Soon after, we went upstairs to bed, first taking a hearty leave of our friend; and we amused ourselves with fancying how the party below were still discussing us. Thus, for the first time in our lives, we acted the part of "The Great Unknown."

My object now was to get across to the Taunus range, there to spend a few days in fine air and pretty scenery, and so to reach Heidelberg for the Sunday. This I could do by railway, but only by making a very long round by Wetzlar, Giessen, and Frankfort. A glance at the map showed that there was an ordinary road which would take me across country direct to Königstein, in the heart of the Taunus, saving an enormous distance. On consulting my Limburg friend, I learnt from him that this journey was sometimes made, and he was kind enough to make a bargain for a light carriage with a pair of ponies to take us. The distance is about twenty-five miles.

Soon after seven o'clock next morning we started. It was a beautiful morning, the air fresh and clear; and as we wound up the hill leading from the valley of the Lahn, and lost sight at length even of the Cathedral spire, and found ourselves on a high table-land, we congratulated ourselves on being behind our active ponies instead of in a dull railway carriage. It is a pleasant country that we passed through; first high above the valley, then lower again, and, lastly, up and down among the forest-clad Taunus hills. A few miles from Limburg we came to the village of Selters (Niederselters in full), and galloping through it at full speed, as our young German driver (a very stupid fellow, by-the-by) loved to do whenever he came to a village, soon arrived at the "Brunnen," or spring, which produces the famous Seltzer-water. The village itself is but a poor one, but the water establishment is on a large scale. Besides the building which covers the spring, and in which the various operations of bottling, corking, and packing are carried on, there is a large boarding-house for patients, with the usual accompaniments of public rooms and pleasure grounds. We alighted, and spent some time in the bottling-house. We quenched our thirst from the spring itself, and might have had as many more draughts as we pleased for the asking, and were shown the whole process of filling the bottles, corking, and capsuling them, each operation taking scarcely a moment. As many as seventy people are constantly employed, and many thousands of bottles are kept in stock. They are sent to all parts of the world, and certainly the natural water is far superior to the artificial imitation of it. The bottles themselves are a curiosity, from the enormous quantities in which they are made. More than one pottery is entirely devoted to making them. They are made in the roughest fashion of a red clay, and cost less than a halfpenny each. I have given a portrait of one.

But did you ever hear of a *bottle mountain*? Selters

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can show one. A few hundred yards beyond the Brunnen, the road skirts a deep hollow. Into this millions and millions of broken red bottles have been thrown, to fill up the chasm. Year after year this has been done, and is done still; and now the bottle



SELTZER-WATER BOTTLE.

mountain has been raised to a level with the road, and projects far into the valley, like the spoil-bank beside a railway; and still it grows and grows, as fresh loads of broken bottles are tipped down the steep slope. Perhaps this formation may puzzle geologists of a future age.

We reached Königstein at half-past twelve, in time to join the *table d'hôte* at one, to which, after

our early start and long drive, we did full justice. The "Lion" appears to have grown, by successive additions, from a village inn to a rather pretentious hotel. The garden behind is open to the hills, and, with its shady trees and its little fountain, is a pleasant place. Königstein itself is a considerable village, almost a town, with one long street, which ends with a picturesque old arch, and crowned by a fine ruined castle, its chief feature. This is partly ancient and partly modern, but its ruined state makes it all look ancient now. It was finally blown up by the French at the close of the last century. A lofty square tower, however, still remains, from the top of which a noble view is obtained. The little town lies immediately below; opposite is the wooded hill of Falkenstein, with its ruined tower, and all around are the Taunus hills. The view from Falkenstein is perhaps finer still, though less panoramic. The eye follows the course of the Main through the level plain between Mainz and Frankfurt; and across the Main, fading into the dim distance, is seen the range of hills called the Bergstrasse, which extends from near Frankfurt to Heidelberg and the Neckar. Frankfurt itself lies to the left, and to the right glimpses are caught of the Rhine, and of more than one lofty spire beyond. We found ourselves here almost entirely among foreigners. This and the neighbouring places seem much frequented by Frankfurt people. The air is pure and invigorating; and little more than half-an-hour's railway, and another half-hour's road, brings them to Königstein. It stands almost on the verge of the hot plain, but is raised high above it. Three miles off, down a straight, steep road, is Soden, which, when we were there, was sweltering in a burning heat. To this place there is a little branch from the Mainz and Frankfurt Railway, the Taunus line.

The Feldberg is the chief hill in the neighbourhood; the Great Feldberg, for there is a Little Feldberg too. It is three or four miles from Königstein, and 2,700 feet above the sea, or about twice the height of Königstein. Meaning to start on this expedition early next morning, I busied myself in the evening in getting a trustworthy spike put to my stick. This was no easy matter. As for a blacksmith, I could find none. At length I was told of a *turner*, who might be able to do the job for me, and to him I repaired. I found him a little old man, living and working in two tiny rooms, but with a good assortment of home-made sticks and other

pieces of turnery. His lathe was a most primitive concern, but the old man seemed to be thoroughly master of it, and thus to deserve his German appellation, "Drehermeister." For a few pence he soon fitted a strong iron spike to my stick, which does me good service to this day.

After an early breakfast we started for the Feldberg on a beautiful morning. For the first three-quarters of an hour we followed the road by which we had entered Königstein from Limburg; we then struck off to the right through the forest; and thus, partly by country roads and partly by footpaths, but always through the forest, we reached the summit at eleven o'clock. It is the highest point of the Taunus range, and commands a fine panoramic view. The air was fresh and delightful, and we spent three hours or more drinking it in, and enjoying the charming prospect. We lay at full length on the short, springy turf, clambered on the rocks, and explored every side, ending by a very satisfactory meal in a little wooden inn on the summit. The view is much more extensive than that from Königstein Castle or from Falkenstein. The lower hills of the Taunus are round you on every side; beyond them, and seen over their tops, a wide stretch of country melts into the sky. Homburg and Frankfurt look quite near. Carriages can now ascend to the very top, and the little inn is being made into a larger one. Thus do wheels and the other conveniences of life now invade spots once sacred to pedestrians and knapsacks. The Feldberg now forms one of the regular expeditions from Homburg, though the drive is rather a long one.

But the most attractive object seen from the top was a little village that seemed to lie at our very feet, in the direction of the heart of the Taunus. A church nestling among trees, a little chapel on a detached slope yet nearer, a group of old roofs, and a ruined castle above—all this, picturesquely grouped on a gentle hill, and lying invitingly at our feet, was quite irresistible. So we turned away from the side by which we had come up, and struck down the steep slope towards Reifenberg, meaning thence to make our way home. Though downhill, we found it a good half-hour's walk. The little detached chapel proved to be beautifully situated, and formed a capital point from which to sketch the village and castle. Here we were joined by a young man in poor attire, who asked for nothing, but seemed to wish to act as our showman. At first I was disposed to shake him off (a showman, to my mind, spoiling every sight), but, seeing that one coat-sleeve hung empty by his side, I was led to ask him about himself, and was then not sorry to employ him for an hour, and put a little into his pocket. The poor fellow, still quite young, had been an engineer, and had had his arm torn off through an accident. Thus he had lost his means of livelihood, and was dependent on what little he could earn by odd jobs. He was intelligent, and by no means ill-educated. I had a few little German books and tracts with me; two or three of them he received with apparent pleasure.

He took us to the top of one of the two towers of the castle—the only one which can be ascended—and then showed us the way to the village inn, where, for the sum of fivepence, we refreshed ourselves with a huge bottle of Seltzer-water, direct from Selters, so huge that we could not get to the end of it. It is a primitive inn. We were shown into

a large room upstairs. The windows appeared never to have been opened; but we managed with difficulty to open one, and thus to let in the beautiful air from outside. At one end was a bed, a port-manteau, a rod, and sundry other articles, which seemed to show that some wandering fisherman had taken up his quarters here for a time. At the other end was a piano; *such* a piano! Was it the *first* that was made? And did such tones ever before proceed from a musical instrument, so-called?

This village is called Ober-Reifenberg, to distinguish it from another called Unter-Reifenberg, at a short distance. The stream which runs past it along the little valley is clear and sparkling, and is said to be good for trout-fishing. Certainly it looks so; but I believe the fishing is in private hands, and leave must be got. Those who love the gentle craft, and delight in a beautiful air and in woods and hills, might do worse than take up their quarters for a while at such a village as Reifenberg, where they might live cheaply, though doubtless in somewhat homely fashion.

A gentle ascent of three-quarters of an hour took us to the point in the forest where the roads to the Feldberg and to Reifenberg diverge from each other, and so we got back to Königstein by the same road as we had followed in the morning, after a round of about twelve miles.

Next day we bade adieu reluctantly to the hills, and drove down to Soden, to be broiled there by the intense heat of the mid-day sun. It is a watering-place of moderate size, little resorted to by foreigners, but much frequented by Germans, of whom as many as 3,000 are said to be there as patients in the season. Certainly it was very full when we were there; and the *table d'hôte* at the Hotel Collozeus (where we dined well and cheaply) was full. There is a neat Curhaus, standing in grounds of some extent. The water, whatever its curative properties may be, is abominably nasty. The place is certainly pretty, and it is quiet and modest in comparison with its grand neighbours, Homburg and Wiesbaden; but it is very hot, and seemed to us stifling and relaxing after Königstein. We were not sorry, therefore, to turn our backs on it, taking the little branch railway to Höchst, and so getting to Frankfort. There we put up at the Römischer Kaiser, a capital old-fashioned hotel, where I had been once before, and spent the evening in wandering about both the old and new parts of the city, not omitting the Juden-gasse, or Jews' lane. Frankfort, however, is far too much in the beaten track to fall within my scheme; so no more of Frankfort, except this, that we were caught there in such a storm of rain as I never had been out in before. We had just emerged from one of the narrow lanes near the Dom, or Cathedral, lined with the quaintest old houses, into a wider street adjoining the market-place, called the Römerberg, when a cloud of inky blackness, which had been threatening us for some time, suddenly burst, and came down in torrents of rain. The pavement on both sides was bordered with fruit-women's stalls, and round them were ranged on the ground piles of empty baskets, and great heaps of cabbages, carrots, and other vegetables, including huge pumpkins and the curious-looking kohl-rabi. In two minutes the street was a river. A torrent of water rushed along its whole breadth, floating the baskets, drowning the cabbages, and dashing into the square beyond. From a grocer's shop in which we had

taken refuge we watched the poor women, drenched to the skin and ankle-deep in water, trying to save their baskets and to put their fruit under shelter of the adjoining buildings; as for the vegetables, there was no time to think of them. There was a din of eager voices; some laughed, others seemed more inclined to cry; but I must say, all were good-tempered. There was no scolding, no swearing; and the whole scene was lively and amusing. In ten minutes all was over; the rain ceased, the sun shone out again, the stalls were pulled out from their shelter, and the poor women shook themselves and began to display their goods again. As for the pavement, it shone white and clean in the sun—it had much wanted washing before; but the Römerberg, and still more the quay beyond, was full of great pools of water and running streams.

SCHOOL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES.

THE late Canon Kingsley (an excellent authority), in his admirable work on "Health and Education," thus gives his opinion of the value of Naturalists' Field Clubs:—"A laboratory for chemical experiment is a good thing, it is true, as far as it goes; but I should prefer to the laboratory a naturalists' field club, such as are prospering now at several of the best public schools, certain that the boys would get sound inductive habits of mind, as well as health, manliness, and cheerfulness, amid scenes to remember which will be a joy for ever."

It is gratifying to find that Natural History Societies and Naturalists' Field Clubs have been formed in connection with several of our public and endowed schools, and that the head masters of the schools are sensible of the great value of these organisations in developing a spirit of inquiry and observation among the boys. It is to be hoped that, in time, the great importance of natural science as a branch of general education will be fully and generally admitted, and that it will form an integral part of the instruction given in all schools in this country. Its exclusion, at present, from a very large number of our middle and upper schools cannot be regarded otherwise than as a serious defect and a great practical evil, for it must narrow unduly and injuriously the mental training of the young, and the knowledge, interests, and pursuits of men in maturer life.

It is hoped that the following short account* of a few of the School Natural History Societies already established may prove both interesting and instructive, and that it may induce many other schools to attempt the formation of similar societies.

The Natural History Society in connection with Marlborough College (the earliest, it is believed, that was founded at any public school) was established in April, 1864, when two or three members of the school, who had a taste for natural history, banded themselves together, electing the Rev. T. A. Preston, one of the masters, as their president, and agreeing to meet on certain nights for consultation. At first difficulties cropped up thickly, but scientific energy, aided by the firm support of the Rev. G. G. Bradley (the late head master), in time overcame these. The

* Gleaned chiefly from the Report on the Teaching of Science in Public and Endowed Schools of the Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science.

society grew, and a year and a half after its formation published its first report. It now publishes its reports half-yearly, numbers more than fifty members, and its collections have outgrown its museum. One of the masters, as already mentioned, is president; other masters frequently attend and read papers. There are fortnightly meetings, at which papers are read, very often by the boys themselves. There are various sections (geological, botanical, entomological, archæological, etc.), each being presided over by one of the members, and furnishing quarterly or more frequent reports. There are one or two field days every term: on these days the boys go to explore new districts beyond the reach of an ordinary walk. We may add that Dr. Farrar bore strong testimony to the benefits of the Society during his mastership.

One result of the formation of this society has been the production by a Marlburian (Everard F. Im Thurn) of a work on the "Birds of Marlborough," in the preface to which the author says that it is to the Natural History Society of that school that he owes the formation of tastes which now prove a continual source of pleasure and occupation.

At Rugby School a Natural History Society was founded in 1867, and it consists of honorary members (chiefly masters of the school), corresponding members (chiefly old pupils), members (present scholars who have been elected full members for work done), and associates (present scholars not yet promoted to full membership). The society at present comprises nearly one-fifth of the school. It is worked by public meetings held once a fortnight, at which objects of interest are exhibited and papers by masters or boys are read; by sectional meetings of boys having similar tastes, as, for instance, the botanists, the geologists, the microscopists; next, for work or discussion, by occasional, though necessarily rare, excursions from Rugby, and by the use of a special room, to which the members of the society alone have access. In this room are kept collections of insects, plants, etc.; dissections and skeletons arranged for study; and a library of books on natural science is being formed for reference. A report of the proceedings of the society is published annually.

A Natural History Society in connection with Wellington College was founded early in 1868, through the efforts of one or two of the masters, and any success which may have attended it during the first year of its existence is due in a great measure to them. The meetings, which are held once a fortnight, have been numerously attended; the members, numbering about twenty boys, have the power of introducing others to the lectures. The average attendance at the meetings is thirty or forty (often the number is larger), and various interesting papers, contributed by the boys themselves, have been read, on mosses, hawks, photography, fortification, electricity, snakes, manufacture of alum, and the natural history of man. The botanical, entomological, and zoological departments have met with a fair success; but Wellington College is very unfortunately situated in a geological point of view, few fossils and other objects of geological interest being found in the neighbourhood.

At Clifton College a Scientific Society was founded in 1869, and it is managed by the boys themselves and one or two of the science masters. Fortnightly meetings are held, at which scientific papers are read and discussed, and objects illustrative of natural

history are exhibited and explained. A record of the proceedings of the society is kept by the secretaries. The number of boys who can belong to it is limited to seventy, and the interest excited by it in the school is so considerable that there are regularly a good many boys waiting their turn for election. The science masters and the students have formed a museum of a strictly educational character, only admitting what will contribute directly to its educational value; and they have planted a moderate-sized botanic garden with typical specimens of plants, which will materially help the study of botany. There is also an apparatus for meteorological observations. In all this the aim has been to make the boys themselves the chief agents, only advised and assisted by the science masters and one or two scientific neighbours who take a warm interest in these matters. The head master adds:—"I attach great importance to this voluntary work, and should wish to see it encouraged and fostered in all schools." He further states that the society "has exercised a valuable influence by stimulating the taste and intellect, and giving much enjoyment to many boys who would otherwise have lived a very obscure and dull life in the school, whilst it has also been of use in helping to give something of an intellectual tinge to the ordinary intercourse and conversation of the boys. Such institutions prevent the athletic side of school life from becoming too exclusively predominant."

At Winchester College a Natural History Society has been started to encourage the boys to collect specimens, and to communicate with one another about them. It is limited to fifty boys, who adopt the members. It meets once in three weeks, and two of the masters help to manage it. The boys have shown that they are interested in the objects of the society, as they have read papers, and have made creditable collections of plants, shells, insects, fossils, and minerals. Prizes have been given at different times for such collections by the head master and one of the assistant masters, but the head master considers that the boys collect as well for themselves without prizes. Gradually a museum and library are being formed (one of the class-rooms having been given up for the purpose), and sets of apparatus are being procured; these, however, are works of time, and are not yet far advanced. This society has created a healthy interest. The head master looks forward to the time when a laboratory can be established (there being at present no means of teaching chemistry except by lectures), and also a botanic garden.

A Natural History Society has been established at Cheltenham College, consisting of ten of the masters, of whom three are working members, and forty boys. The secretary is a boy. The meetings are held weekly or fortnightly during the six winter months, and in summer there are fortnightly excursions. The influence is found to be good, decidedly; but hitherto it has not acted on a large number of the boys.

At Eton College there is a Literary and Scientific Society, managed by the boys and the members elected by them. The members read papers, and a discussion takes place. Occasionally lectures are given by persons not resident at Eton, by invitation of the society.

At Harrow School there is a Scientific Society, the meetings of which are held once a fortnight. Papers are read by the members, or occasionally by

strangers. It is not easy, as yet, to estimate its influence on the boys generally, but the members themselves undoubtedly receive benefit from the papers and the discussions which follow.

The Manchester Grammar School Philosophical Society was established in 1869. It is composed of the boys of the sixth and other science forms; its officers are elected from among the members by ballot; it meets every Friday, after school, for the reading and discussion of scientific papers, written by its members. The society is considered to be decidedly useful in promoting scientific reading and thought among the members.

At Taunton College School there is a botanic garden of two acres, which will enable any of the boys who may have a taste for botany to study the subject in the most instructive and satisfactory manner. A museum is in contemplation.

The Natural History and Polytechnic Society, in connection with the Friends' Boys' School, York, consists practically, and has done for many years, of all the scholars and teachers. A committee of elder scholars and teachers, annually elected, manage the affairs, and take care of the collections belonging to the society. A yearly exhibition is held of collections of plants, shells, insects, etc., made by members during the year, small prizes being given from the society's funds for them, as well as for essays, natural history diaries, observatory registers; and, in the polytechnic department, the exhibitions for which are half-yearly, for drawings, turnery, fretwork, etc.; photography, electrotyping, taxidermy, the preparation of skeletons, and various other pursuits, have also occasionally been added.

NEW HELPS FOR HOSPITALS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EPISODES IN AN OBSCURE LIFE."

IV.—SPECIAL HOSPITALS.

OF the special hospitals aided by the Sunday and Saturday Hospital Funds, few are more interesting than those set apart for women.

I will take as their type the one in Vincent Square, Westminster, chiefly because, although doing most excellent work, it is, I believe, the one most in want of funds. It has not launched out into unpaid-for architecture, but wisely feels its way, striving to make every penny it gets of direct benefit to its patients. Almost all its offices have honorary occupants. In one year it relieved 35 in- and nearly 4,000 out-patients, at a cost of about £500.

It is situated in a neighbourhood which swarms with poor women. Wishing to provide them, when disabled by sickness, with the advice of those who have made a special study of the diseases of their sex, and to secure for them, at the same time, greater privacy than can be expected in a general hospital, the late Right Hon. George Hamilton, having obtained the help of medical and other friends, took a house in Vincent Square, and opened it as a Dispensary for Women and Children. Afterwards six beds were established for in-patients, a number which was increased to ten when the committee were able to annex the adjoining house. The hospital is certainly situated in as cheerful a spot as could be found in its depressingly drab and dingy neighbourhood, since its windows look out on the tree-fringed, and sometimes sheep-dotted, playground of the Westminster boys.

It is not its own neighbourhood alone the hospital relieves; patients come to it from all parts of London, and also the country. Having found that entirely gratuitous relief led to abuse, the managers require every patient who can to pay something a week, if only a penny, and request subscribers, before granting a letter of recommendation, to inquire into the circumstances of the applicant, and then specify in the letter the sum she may reasonably be expected to pay. In-patients admitted on the recommendation of a subscriber are expected to pay 5s. a week, others from 10s. to 15s. As the hospital at present can only make up ten beds, of course many applications for them have to be refused. When I went over the clean, quiet little wards, and thought of the crowded, noisy, often noisome, rooms in which the patients would have been lodged if they had been left to "dree their weird" of sickness in their own homes, I did not wonder that their eyes as well as their lips expressed their gratitude. Discharged patients write letters full of thanks to nurse, doctors, and visitors, and bring little thank-offerings of fruit and flowers to the hospital. They collect for it, too, in their small way.

I will give one case, of which I know the particulars, as a sample of the good the hospital does.

A needlewoman had lost the use of her lower limbs. For more than a year she worked as well as she could, lying on her bed. At last she became so much worse that her friends carried her to the hospital—they could not afford a cab. She was almost fainting when she arrived. Besides her physical agony, she was in great distress at the thought of being brought to die amongst strangers. A kitten first made her feel at home in the hospital. The little thing had strayed into her ward, and was running round and round after its own tail. The kindly nurse, noticing that she was watching it, took it up and placed it on her bed for her to stroke it. After that, she and the nurse became fast friends, and she soon became so cheerful that she cheered up the other patients also as she sang at her work, lying on her back. In four months she was perfectly cured, walking home gleefully from the no longer dreaded refuge to which she had been carried with so heavy a heart. I may as well mention here that those who have not money to give to this excellent institution, may aid it by sending waste paper, written and printed (whether torn up or whole), in separate bags, carriage paid. This "rubbish" is received at the hospital, and sold for its benefit.

Of the ways in which a bread-winner may be disabled, blindness, I think, must be one of the most depressing when it is coming on. It is not so when the blindness is hopeless—at least, amongst the poor. Under such circumstances I have been struck by their calm cheerfulness. I am not referring to those who trade on their calamity, but to those who try to support themselves by labour in spite of it.

Step into one of the dépôts of the Society for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind. At first you feel very sad at the sight of the men and women who are boring, bristling, wiring brushes, or poising the backs, to make sure that they are square to the fraction of a barleycorn, mat-making, mop-making, cutting and splitting firewood with an apparent carelessness which makes you tremble for their fingers until you mark their marvellous deftness,—their hands move just as if some unseen being guided them; tying up the sticks in bundles, making and

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mending chairs, etc. As you look at their blank faces you fancy that they typify their minds and hearts. But speak to one of them, and although the soul has no windows to look out of, you soon discover that it does not sit in sombre solitude. The face lights up as a mist-covered landscape brightens when sunshine gilds, although it cannot scatter, the fog. The hand that was moving like a machine twines the cane-slip in and out with a blither dexterity, and you feel ashamed of your own despondency and selfishness when a cheery voice begins to express, amongst other things, pity for *neighbours'* troubles and unaffected trust in God.

Of course, all poor blind folk are not saints, but many manifest a really religious resignation to their circumstances; and where the religious element is wanting, an equable cheerfulness of temperament is surprisingly common amongst them. I once was present at the meeting of an adult blind class, and, although the chief part of the entertainment was the reading of a portion of a not very interestingly-written text-book on physiology, I found it quite a lively gathering. Almost every one made his or her little joke. One man, except during the religious portion of the exercises, and when the missionary was reading, kept on making jokes. Another time, touching my questions on his fingers, I had a long talk with a man who was perfectly deaf as well as blind. He seemed also almost perfectly contented. He exhibited his carvings in wood, brought out his chess-board with raised squares, dressed it for a game with his extra-knobbed pieces, and seemed to have but two wishes in the world—expressed without the slightest repining—to get a little pension from Day's Charity, and to find a few more purchasers for his type-brushes.

But though the poor may be cheerful when blind, they must, as I have said, feel very sad when they are growing blind. As the mist that floats before their eyes grows denser and denser, an analogous gloom must gather over their hearts. Truly, light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. Ice-beset Arctic voyagers, with the hope of moon and stars and aurora borealis to cheer their long night, experience a dreary sinking of heart when they see the sun go down to rise no more that year. What, then, must it be to feel that in a short time you will see the sun for the last time for ever—that thenceforth you will have to grope at midday, and become, though perhaps once proud of your strength and adroitness, more helpless than a seeing child?

All persons over whom blindness is impending must feel like this; but especially black must the prospect appear to those who have to support themselves and their families by handicrafts, for the exercise of which the possession of eyesight seems absolutely necessary.

The Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital was founded in Moorfields in 1804, for, according to the amended rules of 1873, "the relief of the poor of every country and denomination suffering from disease or injury of the eye." In 1875 it was enlarged, and it can now accommodate 100 in-patients at one time. During that year it had 1,332 in-patients. The total of the attendances of out-patients in the same period amounted to 96,725. The catalogue of diseases treated would be simply bewildering to non-professional readers—a nightmare of morbid Greek and Latin derivatives. Amongst them were thirty-

one cases of tobacco amaurosis. The operations amounted to 2,123; of these 216 were extractions of senile cataracts, and 148 of soft; and 369 for strabismus. When one reads of the cuttings and snippings, the piercing with needles, the scrapings and tattooings to which the delicate organ they operate upon was exposed, one cannot but lift up the hands of wonder at the skill of ophthalmic surgeons, and feel most grateful if free from a fear of becoming compelled to resort to it for personal benefit.

To be deaf is not so dreadful a calamity as to be blind. Cynics have said that its advantages counter-balance its disadvantages; but these are very heavy, and in a world so full as this is of music, in spite of its discords—melodies and harmonies of the human voice, of singing birds, of musical instruments, and of the winds and waters; great is the delight which is at one entrance quite shut out when the ear is closed.

In Dean Street, Soho, there is a Royal Dispensary for persons in indigent circumstances afflicted with deafness and noises in the head and ears, which relieves its thousands annually.

When I was in Australia, I remember a Chinaman, on the next station to ours, committed suicide because he had got the toothache—hanged himself from a honeysuckle-tree; still toothache, if we may judge from caricatures, is generally considered a comic rather than a tragic matter. It is hard to say why it should be thought funny. Let any one who has had a really "raging tooth" ask himself whether the inheritance of a fortune at such a time would have given him much pleasure if inherited on condition that his acutest paroxysms of pain should become hopelessly chronic. In Leicester Square there is a handsome Dental Hospital, which is also a valuable School of Dental Science and Art. It grants to every poor applicant suffering pain, gratuitous advice and any operative assistance that may be immediately necessary, without a letter of introduction. In one year more than 10,000 teeth have been extracted at the hospital. Owing to improvements in the administration of anæsthetics, the number of attendances is less than it used to be, since a greater number of teeth can be removed at one visit.

There are three Orthopædic Hospitals, in Great Portland Street, Hanover Square, and Hatton Garden, for those who suffer from club-foot, curvatures of the spine, and other deformities.

In the City Road there stands a Hospital (St. Mark's) for Fistula, etc., which has done, and is doing, much good, but which could do more if removed to another situation. The present building is not old; its smoke-dimmed bricks show how the neighbourhood has been "built in" since it was built there. The committee could fill 100 beds, but when the thirty-four that they possess are constantly occupied for a few months, wounds will not heal, ulceration sets in, and the hospital becomes generally unhealthy. Consequently it has either to be closed for cleansing, or else far fewer patients than the average can be admitted, in order that it may be purified ward by ward. And this is the case in spite of the fact that a large sum of money has been laid out in making the ventilation and drainage of the hospital as perfect as they can be made. Since its foundation, in 1835, the hospital has had more than 30,000 patients. One feature of its management is well worthy of a *nota bene*. Notwithstanding an increase in the number of patients, and the raised

price of almost everything, the expenditure of the hospital between 1872 and 1875 was diminished by nearly £400 per annum, without any diminution of the patients' comfort.

The two funds whose claims I am advocating do not merely give money to hospitals—they promote economy, by apportioning their awards according to the ratio between the costs of management and maintenance. St. Mark's has a Samaritan Society which, besides sending convalescents to the sea-side, and looking after the families of disabled bread-winners during their stay in hospital, does what it can for the comfort of patients discharged incurable. Another piece of Samaritanism in connection with this hospital is very pretty. The Spitalfields Bible Flower Mission supplies each patient with a little nosegay constantly, from the beginning of spring until late in autumn. Freshly cheerful little visitors—sometimes coming, no doubt, to those who have no other friends to come to their bedside.

Consumption is a disease which hangs the brightest sky with black, both for the sufferers and for those who belong to them. Imagine what it must be to a Spitalfields weaver, or a widow match-maker in Bethnal Green, and their families. Day by day the cough becomes more hacking, a heavier burden lies upon the chest. The cheeks wear the flush of hectic fever; the eyes glow with an eerie brightness; and there is often a delusive hope of recovery even when the frame is wasting away, and the chill dew of death is on the brow. Weaker and weaker, wearier and wearier, the workman or workwoman rises in the morning, and strives to force the languid hands to perform the necessary toil, until they can work no longer, and those who depend upon them are left to battle with the hard, busy world as best they may.

One-ninth of the total mortality, one-fifth of the mortality of adults in England and Wales, is owing to consumption. In London alone 15,000 persons, three-fourths of them males, very many of them the sole supports of those belonging to them, are yearly wasting away beneath this awful blight.

To furnish an asylum during their brief stay on earth to the consumptive poor, to relieve or even cure them if possible, the Hospital for Consumption was founded at Brompton. It is a handsome college-like building, with a chapel and well-drained grounds, in which the patients, if the weather be not too cold, can walk soon after the heaviest rains. A lift lowers and raises those too weak to go down and up the stairs—a lift worked by steam, which warms the water in the kitchen and the baths, turns the spit, and grinds the coffee. Cheerful fires are kept burning in every ward, and by means of hot-air pipes and hot-water pipes nearly the same temperature is maintained throughout the wards, galleries, corridors, and chapel. One of the galleries is named after the patron of the hospital, the Queen; another after its most munificent benefactress, Jenny Lind. Out-patients as well as in-patients are prescribed for and supplied with medicines by the hospital. It has a home affiliated to it, in which accepted patients waiting for admission, and discharged patients not yet strong enough to work, are received on payment of the bare cost of their food; and a Rose Fund, which supplies discharged patients with clothes and a little money. The fund derives its name from the hon. secretary, who requested his fellow-committeemen to devote to this most useful purpose the money they had subscribed in order that a portrait of him

might be hung up in the board-room of the institution of which he was virtually the founder. The picture might have been painted very skilfully, but the fund is the finer portraiture of character, and will endure when the features on canvas would have faded.

Varieties.

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD.—The effects of the work of Christ are even to the unbeliever indisputable and historical. It expelled cruelty; it curbed passion; it branded suicide; it punished and repressed an execrable infanticide; it drove the shameless impurities of heathendom into a congenial darkness. There was hardly a class whose wrongs it did not remedy. It rescued the gladiator; it freed the slave; it protected the captive; it nursed the sick; it sheltered the orphan; it elevated the woman; it shrouded as with a halo of sacred innocence the tender years of the child. In every region of life its ameliorating influence was felt. It changed pity from a vice into a virtue. It elevated poverty from a curse into a beatitude. It ennobled labour from a vulgarity into a dignity and a duty. It sanctified marriage from little more than a burdensome convention into little less than a blessed sacrament. It revealed for the first time the angelic beauty of a purity of which men had despaired, and of a meekness at which they had utterly scoffed. It created the very conception of charity, and broadened the limits of its obligations from the narrow circle of a neighbourhood to the widest horizons of the race. And while it thus evolved the idea of humanity as a common brotherhood, even where its tidings were not believed—all over the world, wherever its tidings were believed, it cleansed the life and elevated the soul of each individual man. And in all lands, where it has moulded the characters of its true believers, it has created hearts so pure, and lives so peaceful, and homes so sweet, that it might seem as though those angels who had heralded its advent had also whispered to every depressed and despairing sufferer among the sons of men, "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold."—*Canon Farrar's Life of Christ.*

SIR CHARLES NAPIER.—A lynx-eyed fiery man, with the spirit of an old knight in him; more of a hero than any modern I have seen for a long time. A singular veracity one finds in him; not in his words alone, which, however, I like much for their fine rough *naïveté*, but in his actions, judgments, aims; in all that he thinks, and does, and says—which, indeed, I have observed is the root of all greatness or real worth in human creatures, and properly the first (and also the rarest) attribute of what we call GENIUS among men.—*T. Carlyle.*

PARISH WORK.—No clergyman knows less about the working of a parish than I do; but one thing I do know, that I have to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and to be instant in that, in season and out of season and at all risks. . . . And therefore I pray daily for the Spirit of love to guide us, and the Spirit of earnestness to keep us at work. For our work must be done by praying for our people, by preaching to them, in church and out of church (for all instruction is preaching—*vide Hooker*)—by leading them to pray and worship in the liturgy, and by setting them an example—an example in every look, word, and motion—in the paying of a bill, the hiring of a servant, the reproving of a child. We will have no innovations in ceremony. But we will not let public worship become "dead bones." We will strive and pray, day and night, till we put life into it, till our parish feels that God is the great Idea, and that all things are in Him, and He in all things. The local means, to which so much importance is attached nowadays, by those very sects who pretend to despise outward instruments, I mean the schools, charities, etc., we must attend to, and make them tools for our work, which is to teach men that there is a God, and that nothing done without Him is done at all, but a mere sham and makeshift. We must attend the schools and superintend the teaching, going round to the different classes, and not hearing them the letter, but trying, by a few seasonable words, to awaken them to the spirit.—*Life of Charles Kingsley.*

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